

REMARKS

During prosecution of the U.S. Application Serial No. 09/670,147 (now allowed), Applicants submitted a Response dated March 19, 2002, in which the following four process variants were identified:

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|-----|--------------------------------|-------------|
| (1) | VI + VII -----> IV | (method b1) |
| | IV + V -----> I | (method a2) |
| (2) | VI + VII -----> IV | (method b1) |
| | IV + hydroxyamine -----> II | (method b2) |
| | II + III -----> I | (method a1) |
| (3) | VIII + alkyl nitrite -----> VI | (method c) |
| | VI + VII -----> IV | (method b1) |
| | IV + V -----> I | (method a2) |
| (4) | VIII + alkyl nitrite -----> VI | (method c) |
| | VI + VII -----> IV | (method b1) |
| | IV + hydroxylamine -----> II | (method b2) |
| | II + III -----> I | (method a1) |


The ultimate parent application (now U.S. Patent 6,156,923) was directed to process variant (4), and its first divisional application (Serial No. 09/670,147) was directed to process variant (3). Applicants' claims as now amended are directed to process variant (2).

Applicants have accordingly amended Claim 1 to specify the steps of process variant (2). Because Claim 22 is directed to subject matter that includes that within amended Claim 1, Applicants have canceled Claim 22 as redundant but have amended Claims 23-32 as needed to change their dependency to Claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims remain fully supported in the specification.

Applicants have also canceled Claims 2-21 and 33-71.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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